



GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSE PROCEDURES

If Under Age Eighteen

First License or Learner Permit

Tennessee began issuing a Graduated Driver License on July 1, 2001.

Purpose: To incrementally teach young drivers how to drive by guiding their progression toward full, unrestricted driving.

Focus: To increase the young driver's awareness of the responsibility entrusted to those granted the privilege of driving.

Goal: To increase this awareness through requiring minimum levels of driving experience and safe driving history (record) before allowing teenage drivers to receive a "full-fledged" Class D driver license.



Graduated Driver License

The rules for getting a driver license for those under age 18 are covered in this chapter. Motor vehicle crashes are the major cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 20. By requiring more supervised practice, the State of Tennessee hopes to save lives and prevent tragic injuries.

LEARNER PERMIT

- You must be 15 years old and pass the standard written and visual exams.
- You must hold a learner permit for 180 days.
- You may drive a car only when accompanied by a license driver 21 years or older.
- You may not drive between the hours of 10 P.M. and 6 A.M.
- Passengers between 4-17 years of age must wear a seat belt.

Intermediate License

There are two (2) Intermediate License levels for those who are under 18 years of age. The first level is the Intermediate Restricted License and the second level is the Intermediate Unrestricted License.

FIRST LEVEL - INTERMEDIATE RESTRICTED LICENSE

- You must be sixteen (16) years old and pass the driving test.
- You must have held a learner permit for 180 days.
- You cannot have more than six (6) points on your record during the immediate 180 days preceding your application.
- You must have verification from a parent, legal guardian or driving instructor stating you have fifty (50) hours (ten (10) hours at night) of driving experience.

- Passengers between 4 and 17 years of age must wear a seat belt.

SECOND LEVEL - INTERMEDIATE UNRESTRICTED LICENSE

- To obtain this license you must be 17 years old.
- No additional tests are required.
- You must have held an Intermediate Restricted License for one (1) year.
- You cannot have accumulated more than six points on your driving record.
- You cannot have had a traffic accident that was your fault.
- You cannot have 2 seat belt violations.
- Passengers between 4 and 17 years of age must wear a seat belt.

FINAL LEVEL - REGULAR DRIVER LICENSE

- You may obtain a Class D regular driver license when you are 18 years of age, or
- Upon graduating from high school or receiving a GED.

The word "Intermediate" will be removed, however, the license will still include the "Under 21" indicators.

Proof of Behind The Wheel Driving Experience

Applicants under 18 applying for the Intermediate Restricted Class D must provide certification that they have completed fifty (50) hours of supervised driving experience while holding a valid permit. This experience must include a minimum of ten (10) hours of night-time driving.

Certification of driving experience must be made on the official form (SF-1256) provided by the Department of Safety. This form is available at all DL Stations or may be downloaded from our web site. This form must be signed by either a parent, legal guardian or licensed driving instructor.

Hardship Driver Licenses

The Graduate Driver License (GDL) law **DID NOT** affect or change the Hardship procedures in any manner.

- Hardships can still be issued at age fourteen (14) and will always expire on the driver's sixteenth (16th) birthday.
- Hardships will still automatically serve as a PD once the holder turns fifteen (15) years of age.

If the Hardship (or PD) has not been held by the driver for the minimum of 180 days by the time the Hardship expires on the sixteenth birthday the driver will have to be re-issued the learner permit. This permit will need to be carried for the remainder of time to complete the required 180 days before the issuance of an Intermediate Restricted (IR) can be allowed. The Hardship license still **CAN NOT** be renewed.

New Residents Under 18

If the minor is age fifteen (15) and has a valid permit from the

previous state then a Tennessee learner permit is the only thing that may be issued. The minor must hold a valid permit for a total of 180 days and have attained the age of 16 before being eligible for the Intermediate Restricted License Class D.

- The length of time the minor has held the permit in the previous state may be included in the required 180 day period as long as the minor can provide a certified driving record from the previous state:
 1. Issued within the 30 days immediately preceding the date of Tennessee application and,
 2. Showing a clear driving record with absolutely no violations or accidents on their record. If there are any violations on the previous state record the minor will be required to obtain the Tennessee Learner Permit until the driving record can be reviewed by the Driver Improvement Section to see if the record complies with the “less than 6 points” requirement of Tennessee law.

If the minor is age 16 and holds a valid license (regular, provisional, probationary, graduated, etc.) from the previous state that has been issued for 90 days or more they may apply for an Intermediated Restricted license only.

- If the minor has held the out-of-state license for LESS than 90 days an Intermediate Restricted License may NOT be issued unless a clear driving record from the previous state is provided confirming:
 1. A valid learner permit and/or license class has been held for a combined period of not less than 180 days. (i.e. GA permit held for 120 days + GA license held for 60 days = 180 days total).
 2. NO violations or accidents on the driving record, if any violations on the record then the applicant may only be issued a learner permit, until the previous state record can be reviewed and evaluated by the Driver Improvement Section to see if it complies with the “less than 6 points” requirement of Tennessee law.

Regardless of the length of time the minor has carried the license in the previous state they will be required to hold the **Tennessee** Intermediate Restricted license for a full year before qualifying for the second level GDL.

- If the minor has graduated from high school or received their GED prior to turning 18 they may apply for the regular Class D operator’s license as described previously.

Features of The GDL Photo License

(See next page for examples) All GDL levels will have the photo on the right side of the license and a yellow header bar.

Some of the features of the licenses issued to minors under GDL include:

- **Learner Permits** will have a red color coded Tennessee state imprint indicating GDL in the lower left corner.
 - A minor who is issued a learner permit will be given a “restriction card” to carry along with the permit that explains the restrictions and requirements to advance to

the first level of the Class D license under the GDL Program. An example is shown on page 18.

- **Both levels of the Intermediate License issued** under the GDL program will show the license class as Class D as well as having the words INTERMEDIATE DRIVER LICENSE displayed in the yellow header bar on the front of the license. New Tennessee shaped designations on the face of the license document will indicate at which level the license holder currently is under the GDL Program. Yellow indicates 1st level Intermediate Restricted and Green will indicate Level 2 the Intermediate Unrestricted.
 - A minor who is issued the first level **Intermediate Restricted (IR)** Class D will also be given a “restriction card” to carry along with the license that explains the restrictions and requirements to advance to the second level of the Class D license under the GDL Program. An example is shown on next page.
 - A minor who is issued the second level **Intermediate Unrestricted (IU)** Class D will not be issued any special cards as there are not any restrictions upon their driving at this level of the GDL Program.

Additional Requirements for Minors

Minor/Teenage Affidavits

Applicants not yet eighteen years old must have an adult sign a Minor/Teenage Affidavit and Cancellation form, available at all driver license stations. This form confirms that the adult signing the form joins in the application for the license and will be responsible for the actions of the minor driver. It must be signed by a parent, a step-parent living at the same address as the applicant, legal guardian, or a grandparent authorized by the parent, step-parent or guardian.

If adults cannot accompany the minor to the driver license station to sign the form, it may be picked up ahead of time and signed before a notary public.

If the grandparent is assuming financial responsibility for the youth, the grandparent must bring a notarized statement authorizing this, signed by the parent, step-parent, custodian or guardian, as appropriate. The statement is not on a department form, but should be in the following general format:

“I do hereby authorize _____
(name of grandparent)
to sign for a driver license for _____.”
Signed: _____
(name and relationship of adult granting authorization)
(Notary certificate)

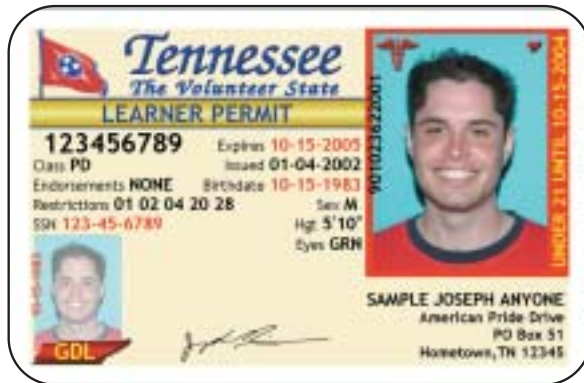
- If a minor applies for a different class of license (such as motorcycle) the parents or legal guardian will be required to sign a second teenage affidavit for that license type.

Proof of School Attendance/Progress

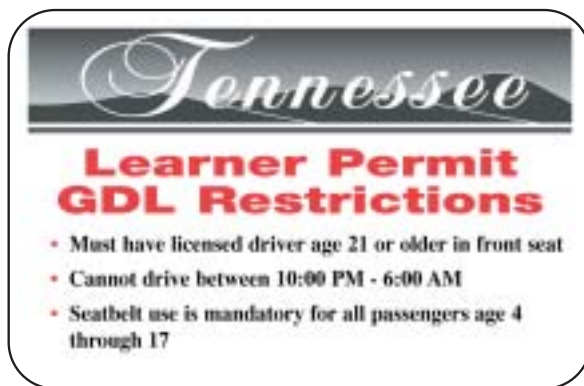
Applicants under the age of 18 must prove they are either enrolled in or have already graduated from high school. Acceptable proof of this status must be provided to the examiner in one of the following methods:

Examples of the license documents issued under the Graduated Driver License (GDL) Program are shown below.

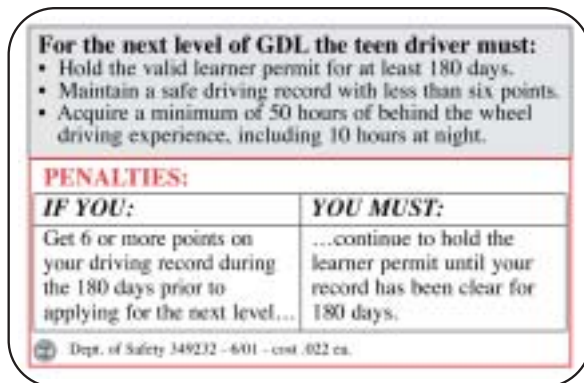
Learner Permit



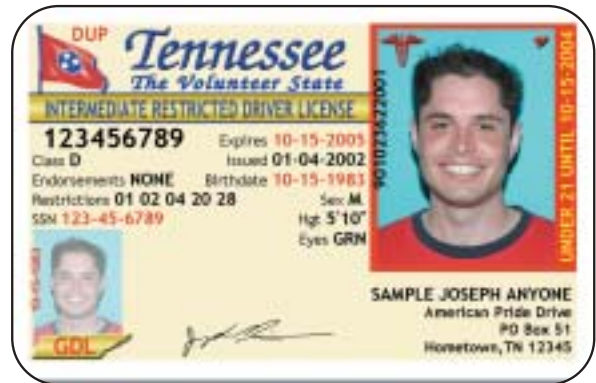
Front of PD Card



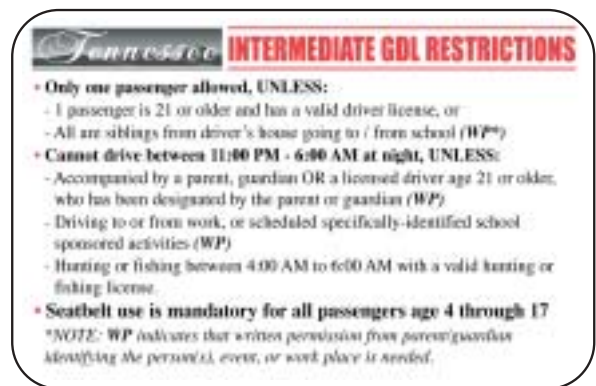
Back of PD Card



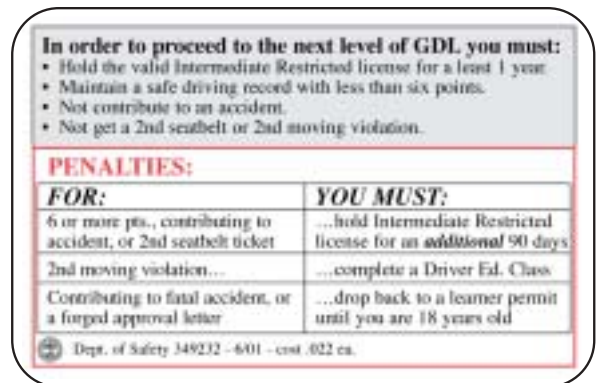
Intermediate Restricted



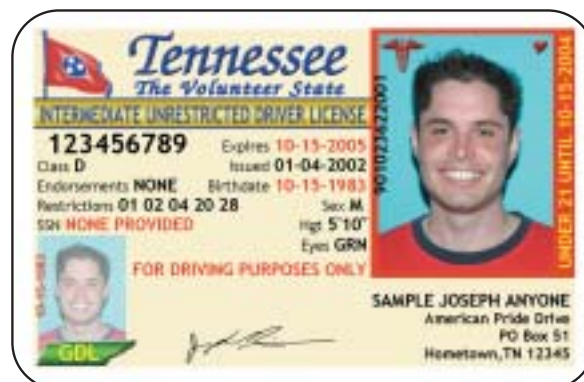
Front of IR Card



Back of IR Card



Intermediate Unrestricted



Note: No Restriction Card issued with this level. No driving restriction applied at this level.

Unsafe driving incidents or violations that could result in the suspension or automatic downgrade of license level under The GDL Program are outlined in the following table:

GDL Penalties (Table: 3.1)			
Incident	After PD Issued	After Intermediate Restricted Issued	After Intermediate Unrestricted Issued
(a) Six or more points on driving record	Requires the applicant to continue to hold the learner permit for an additional time period until they are able to maintain a record with less than 6 points for 180 consecutive days	Adds 90 days to the minimum 1 year teen required to hold Intermediate Restricted (Total = 1 year & 3 months)	If any of the violations listed in (a), (b), (c) or (d) occurred during the time the teen had an Intermediate Restricted license, but the DOS did not receive notice from the court until <i>after</i> we had already issued the teen an Intermediate Unrestricted license, the penalties in the preceding column will still apply. The teen will be “dropped back” to an Intermediate Restricted license for 90 days.
(b) Contributing to the occurrence of an accident	N/A	Adds 90 days to the minimum 1 year teen required to hold Intermediate Restricted (Total = 1 year & 3 months)	
(c) Conviction of a 2nd Seatbelt violation	N/A	N/A Adds 90 days to the minimum 1 year teen required to hold Intermediate Restricted (Total = 1 year & 3 months)	
(d) Conviction of a 2nd Moving violation	N/A	Requires completion of a certified driver education course	
(e) Forged letter of parental approval	N/A	Revocation of Intermediate Restricted and Re-issuance of a Learner Permit only until teen reaches the age of 18	If DOS notified <i>after</i> Intermediate Unrestricted issued, teen’s Intermediate privileges will still be revoked and a Learner Permit re-issued until the 18th birthday.
(f) Contributing to the occurrence of a fatal accident	Must maintain a Learner Permit only until teen reaches the age of 18	Revocation of Intermediate Restricted and Re-issuance of a Learner Permit only until teen reaches the age of 18	Revocation of Intermediate Unrestricted and Re-issuance of a Learner Permit only until teen reaches the age of 18

1. If graduated the applicant must **bring their original high school diploma or G.E.D. certificate** with them when they apply (no photo copies).
2. If still enrolled in a Tennessee school the applicant needs to **ask their school to complete a Certificate of Compulsory School Attendance (Form SF1010) and take the original part of this form with them to a driver license station.** This form is valid for only one month (30 days) from the date of signing by the school official.
 - During the traditional summer vacation months a properly completed SF1010 form signed within the last 30 days of the school year will be accepted throughout the summer until 30 days after the start of the following school year (i.e. signed in May accepted through Aug/Sept approximately).
3. If the applicant is enrolled in school outside of Tennessee (or in an approved private or church school in Tennessee without access to the SF1010 forms) they must provide a statement from the school principal or headmaster **on official school letterhead specifically confirming that the applicant is not truant and is making satisfactory progress in their school classes.**
 - Grade cards or school transcripts are not acceptable as proof of compliance with this law. Due to the various grading scales, evaluation of excused / unexcused

absences and other factors that differ from school system to school system the Driver License personnel are not authorized to interpret the information in these documents. It is the responsibility of the school system or Department of Education to confirm the applicants eligibility and of the applicant to provide satisfactory documentation of this eligibility as required by the Department of Safety.

4. If the applicant is being **Home Schooled the documentation required is as follows:**
 - **Letter from the Superintendent’s Office** in the county of the applicant’s legal residence confirming that the parent has registered their “intent to home school” with the County School System.
 - **Verification of Home School Enrollment (Form SF-1193)** signed and completed by the parent or legal guardian of the applicant affirming the attendance and satisfactory progress of the applicant in the home school courses. Generally home schooling is conducted by the parent/guardian and thus they have the responsibility to confirm this eligibility same as the regular school teacher or principal.
5. Tennessee Department of Education does **NOT** recognize completion of Internet or “correspondence school” courses and thus documentation from these sources would NOT be

acceptable to the Department of Safety as meeting the requirements for licensing of minors.

If a student fifteen years old or older drops out of school, the school is required to notify the Department of Safety which suspends the student's driving privileges. The first time a student drops out, he or she may regain the privilege to drive by returning to school and making satisfactory academic progress. There is no second chance, however. the second time a student drops out he or she must wait to turn 18 years old before being eligible to apply.

If a person who dropped out does return to school, the appropriate school official can certify the student has returned by completing a different section of the Certificate of Compulsory School Attendance. They will give the student a

pink copy of the form to take with them to a driver license station. The Student will be required to pay a \$20 reinstatement fee on top of the appropriate application and license fees. Other fees may be added as well, depending on the individual's history.

Teen / GDL FAQs

1. What is the graduated license law?

The graduated licensing system places certain restrictions on teens under the age of 18 who have learner permits and driver licenses.

2. Are there any changes in how to apply for a learner permit or intermediate license under the GDL law?

The process to apply for a learner permit or intermediate

GDL At-a-Glance Review

Table: 3.2



	LEARNER PERMIT CLASS PD	INTERMEDIATE RESTRICTED	INTERMEDIATE UNRESTRICTED	REGULAR CLASS D
Requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be 15 years old Vision Exam Knowledge Test SF 1010 Form (<i>Proof of Compulsory School Attendance and Satisfactory Progress</i>) Parent or Legal guardian must sign Teenage Affidavit of Financial Responsibility Birth Certificate* Social Security Number ** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be 16 years old Held a valid PD for 6 months Certification of 50 hours behind-the-wheel experience, including 10 hours at night Cannot have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> six or more points on driving record during the 180 days immediately preceding application Driving Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 17 years old Held a valid Restricted Intermediate for 1 year Cannot have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> six or more points on driving record have been at fault in a traffic crash have been convicted of a 2nd seatbelt violation <p><i>[these would add a 90 day waiting period to the 1 yr Intermediate Restricted duration]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be at least 18 years of age Optional: can apply for a duplicate of license, without the word "Intermediate" on its face
Fees:	\$10.50, any age under 18 years old.	Age 16 = \$24.50 Age 17 = \$21.00 Age 18 = Eligible for regular driver license	Age 17 = \$2.00 Age 18 = Eligible for regular driver license (\$8 duplicate fee if had Intermediate license)	\$8.00 or \$12.00, regular duplicate fee depending upon if 1 st or subsequent duplicate
Issued for:	12 months	until age 21	Same expiration date @ age 21	Same expiration date @ age 21
Restrictions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must have licensed driver age 21 or older in front seat Cannot drive between 10:00 PM - 6:00 AM Seatbelts mandatory for all passengers age 4 thru 17 (or child restraint device if under age 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one passenger Cannot drive between 11:00 PM - 6:00 AM Seatbelts mandatory of all passengers age 4 thru 17 (or child restraint device if under age 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seatbelts mandatory for all passengers age 4 thru 17 (or child restraint device if under age 4) No additional restrictions, however, license still states "Intermediate" prominently on the face of the license 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions and license looks like regular "Under 21 license"

* See Chapter 2, page 11 for information on acceptable forms of identification

** See Chapter 2, page 13 for more information in SSN requirements

license is the same with the exception of an additional \$5 fee for each application. To apply for an intermediate license, a parent, legal guardian or license instructor must present certification that the intermediate license applicant has a minimum of 50 hours of behind-the-wheel driving experience, including a minimum of 10 hours of driving at night.

3. What are the restrictions for those with learner permits?

Anyone under the age of 18 who has a learner permit will be prohibited from driving between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. When driving, permit holders must have a licensed driver age 21 or older in the vehicle with them. Seatbelt use is mandatory for everyone in the vehicle under the age of 18 (passengers age 4 and under must be in an approved child restraint device).

4. How long must I have a learner permit before applying for an intermediate restricted license?

Under the new law, anyone under the age of 18 must have their learner permit for a minimum of six months before they can apply for an intermediate restricted license. The minimum age for applying for an intermediate restricted license is 16. If someone with a learner permit gets 6 or more points on their driving record during the 180 days before applying for the intermediate restricted license, they have to continue to hold the learner permit until their record has been clear for a full 180 consecutive days.

5. What are the restrictions for an intermediate restricted license?

- A. Seatbelt use is mandatory for everyone in the vehicle age 17 and under (passengers age 4 and under must be in an approved child restraint device).
- B. Those with an intermediate license can only have one other passenger in the vehicle

UNLESS:

- One or more of the passengers is age 21 or older and has a valid, unrestricted license;
 - The passengers are brothers and sisters, step-brothers or step-sisters, adopted or fostered children residing in the same house as the driver and going to and from school AND the intermediate license holder has in their possession written permission from their parent or guardian to transport their siblings.
- C. *Those with an intermediate license are prohibited from driving between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.*

UNLESS:

- They are accompanied by a parent or guardian;
- They are accompanied by a licensed driver 21 or older who has been designated by the parent or guardian. This designation must be in writing and be in the possession of the teen driver;
- They are driving to or from a specifically identified

school sponsored activity or event and have in their possession written permission from a parent or guardian to do this;

- They are driving to or from work and have in their possession written permission from a parent or guardian identifying the place of employment and authorizing the driver to go to and from work;
- They are driving to or from hunting or fishing between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m. and have in their possession a valid hunting or fishing license.

6. What would happen to an intermediate license holder who is caught with a forged or fake letter?

A driver with an intermediate license who is convicted of having a forged or fraudulent letter or statement will have their intermediate license revoked and will be reissued a learner permit until they reach the age of 18.

7. What will my intermediate license look like?

You may view examples of these licenses on page 17.

8. How long do I have to keep an intermediate restricted license?

Teens must hold their intermediate restricted license for a minimum of one year. After one year, they can apply for an unrestricted intermediate license. There is a \$2 application fee. The word “Intermediate” will still be on the license, but the restrictions will be lifted.

HOWEVER:

If a teen driver has received six or more points (equivalent of two minor traffic citations) on their intermediate restricted license; has contributed to a traffic crash; or has been convicted of a second seatbelt violation, they will have to wait an additional 90 days to apply for an unrestricted intermediate license, meaning they would be required to hold the intermediate restricted for a total of 15 months.

ALSO:

If the teen driver gets a second moving violation while holding the Intermediate Restricted Driver License, he or she will need to complete an approved Driver Education class before being allowed to get an Intermediate Unrestricted Driver License.

At age 18, a driver could apply for a regular unrestricted license without the word “Intermediate” printed on it. There will be an \$8 duplicate fee unless the driver chooses to keep the license with the word “Intermediate” on it until that license is at the end of its five-year renewal cycle.

9. Are there any teens who will not be affected by the change in the law?

The GDL law will not apply to anyone age 18 and older OR anyone under the age of 18 who has graduated high school.